

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
AIR UNIVERSITY

**AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION BEATS A POUND OF CURE: RESOURCING
THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO DEFEND THE NATION**

By

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Preface

The opinions and ideas in this paper derive from my experience as an action officer at US Southern Command. Our Commander was a forward thinker with a clear vision of how to mitigate US security challenges. His strategy acknowledged that in order to defeat the security challenges in the region, our nation must work to address the underlying causes: poverty, inequality of wealth, and corruption. Action officers at all levels in the headquarters enjoyed the privilege of working in a free thinking environment that enabled us to cultivate scores of partnering initiatives in support of this bold and progressive defense strategy.

The idea that poverty, inequality of wealth, and corruption create the conditions from which our security challenges arise is a clear and insightful vision. This concept motivated me and many others on the staff to develop new initiatives towards this seemingly altruistic perspective of defense. Demonstrating characteristic military proficiency, action officers at Southern Command were undeterred by frequent delays often experienced from our undermanned and poorly resourced interagency partners. Many of us on the staff often complained that restrictive DOD policy or binding legislation kept us from doing *our* job. However, despite these difficulties, a barrage of new ideas and programs erupted from the headquarters to attack these underlying causes. What resulted was a temporary identity crisis as our military headquarters seemingly wanted to wrestle the foreign development mission away from these other agencies. While benevolent foreign development programs can be directly attributed to national security, it simply wasn't *our* job.

The astute vision espoused by our commander is representative of a maturation of defense policy. My experience on the staff at US Southern Command inspired me; I now see my opportunity to make a difference in service to this nation. I intuit this new emphasis on phase-0 and non-kinetic operations as a renaissance in military thinking. While the concepts are sound and precise, it will require progressive leaders and resilient initiatives to shift national defense paradigms towards policies that recognize foreign development as a viable defense strategy. This paper begins my journey as a career advocate of integrated interagency strategies. It is my goal to persuade and inspire both subordinate and senior military officers' to break away from traditional Huntington perspectives that define our profession as one that provides managed violence in pursuit of national security aims. As defense leaders, our mission extends beyond the employment of violence, but the employment of integrated strategy that ensures the security of the United States.

Abstract

In 2002, the National Security Strategy (NSS) stated, “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones.”¹ In a post cold war world, it is not “fleets and armies”² that threaten America, but weak and failing states. In order to overcome the security challenges that arise from the ungoverned spaces and vulnerable populations within weak states, the US must employ a balanced foreign development strategy. However, failure to properly resource the nations experts in diplomacy and development has seen the military filling the void by default and institutionalizing foreign development into the DOD mission. The result has been a militarization of foreign policy and has had adverse impacts on US credibility internationally. The Department of State should lead the foreign development programs that will ultimately defend this nation from what the National Security Strategy indicates is our greatest threat - failing states. Properly resourced DOS programs like the Civilian Stabilization Initiative and the Civilian Response Corps represent “an investment which in the long run is less costly in terms of lives and dollars than defense spending that would otherwise be required.”³ Reforming our security institutions and resourcing the State Department now can prevent conflict and obviate the costly use of military force in the future. An ounce of prevention beats a pound of preemption.

Introduction

In 2002, the National Security Strategy (NSS) stated, “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones.”⁴ Historically viewed as a humanitarian issue, the threat posed by failing states is often ignored as national security concerns hedge toward emerging military powers or states with nuclear ambitions. In a post cold war world, it is not “fleets and armies”⁵ that threaten America, but weak and failing states. Strategic planning documents across multiple government agencies acknowledge that failing states pose one of the greatest security threat to the US, most notably the ungoverned areas and vulnerable societies that provide fertile ground for terrorist networks to further their destructive agendas.

Foreign Development programs and building well governed states is a traditional Department of State (DOS) function. Consider the DOS mission statement: “...helping to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world composed of well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and act responsibly within the international system.”⁶ The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), under the DOS, has been responsible for long-range social and economic assistance efforts dating back nearly 50 years to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44 was released in December of 2005 further validating DOS as the lead federal agency with regard to any US government efforts in stabilization. NSPD-44 states, “The Secretary of State shall coordinate and lead integrated USG efforts, involving all US departments and agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities.”⁷ Yet, despite the acknowledged threat of failing states and the executive direction for DOS to coordinate and

lead integrated US efforts to address this threat, the DOS still has not been granted the proper resources to succeed.

Given the limited civilian capacity, the Department of Defense (DOD) is asserting leadership to mitigate this threat to our national security. Military leaders have recognized the threat that emanates from ungoverned areas and the potential for social exclusion to foment vulnerable populations that are susceptible to extremist ideologies. Regional Combatant Commanders now develop Theater Campaign Plans that coordinate military plans and activities towards specified end states in a perpetual state of shaping operations across the globe. Many of these Theater Security Cooperation activities are moving closer and closer to the USAID foreign development mission. Even US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has demonstrated a willingness to take on the DOS diplomacy and development mission. USSOCOM now touts “3-D Operators – members of a multi-dimensional force prepared to lay the groundwork in the myriad diplomatic, development, and defense activities that contribute to our Government’s pursuit of vital national interests.”⁸

Research Question, Thesis and Scope.

Given the security threat posed by failing states, should the Department of Defense employ foreign development strategies to ensure our national security?

The thesis of this paper is that while foreign development is a viable defense strategy, the DOD should not assume this State Department mission. To ensure the security of the nation, the US needs to grant the State Department with the resources to lead USG efforts to mitigate the threats associated with weak and failing states. In light of a State Department not resourced or organized to lead USG efforts, the DOD is assuming the mission by default.

Recent strategic planning documents demonstrate an effort to institutionalize foreign development into the DOD mission. This argument is not intended to espouse an “it’s not our job” line of reasoning. Instead, this paper will persuade the reader to accept five arguments that build to the main thesis:

- 1) Weak and failing states are an enduring security threat to the US
- 2) Foreign development is the most effective strategy to defeat that threat
- 3) The US is institutionalizing foreign development into the DOD mission
- 4) DOS, not DOD should lead foreign development in weak and failing states
- 5) The DOS lacks the resources to lead USG efforts

After compelling the reader to accept these five arguments, a disparity in US foreign policy will become obvious: despite recognition of failing states as an enduring threat across multiple strategic planning documents, the US has failed to resource & equip its experts in diplomacy and development to mitigate that threat. Preoccupied with military primacy, the USG instead continues to focus resources on the DOD. It is the DOS, not the DOD that needs to defend our nation from this security threat. The US needs to move away from its cold war security paradigm; resources should be shifted to the DOS foreign development mission in order to mitigate the dangers associated with weak and failing states.

While there is an ongoing interagency debate on phase-IV reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is beyond the scope of this research. Phase-0 shaping is the primary focus in this paper. Additionally, this paper will make no attempts to offer suggestions on how to reorganize the State Department or USAID. Many DOD authors have tackled this subject.

Similarities among much of that work exists in that all recommendations seemingly propose our interagency partners morph their organizations and processes to look more like the military. I agree that continued transformation is needed among our interagency partners as they take on bigger and more complex missions. However, the roadmap for transformation needs to come from within DOS/USAID, not from the DOD.

Weak and failing states are an enduring security threat to the US

US strategic planning documents acknowledge that failing states pose the greatest security threat to the US. The US first recognized failing states as a top priority for national security in 2002 when the National Security Strategy declared, “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones.”⁹ Failing states supply terrorists with the ungoverned areas and vulnerable societies that provide fertile ground to further their destructive agendas.

Weak and failing states provide ample ungoverned space for terrorist networks to exploit for the purpose of furthering their violent agendas. According to the Fund for Peace’s *Failed State Index*, some of the more common attributes of failing states are the loss of physical control of its territory, an inability to provide reasonable public services, and the absence of legitimate authority to make collective decisions or interact within the international community.¹⁰ When a nation loses control of its territory and is no longer providing basic services, the result is ungoverned space where lawlessness can flourish. In societies absent of the rule of law, the balance of power shifts against ordinary civilians and in favor of armed entities operating outside the law.¹¹ Piracy in Somalia, drug cartels in South America, and Al Qaeda safe havens in Pakistan are all examples of lawless non-state actors exploiting ungoverned areas. If left unchecked by viable governments, the

promulgation of violent extremists in the developing world has the potential to threaten our national survival. As per the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), “Nation-states no longer have a monopoly over the catastrophic use of violence.”¹² A band of terrorists operating freely within the lawless boundaries of Afghanistan was able to plan and conduct a well executed and synchronized attack bringing great destruction and loss of life to the world’s most powerful nation. The nation-states in which these terrorists operate lack the ability to monitor or disrupt the operations of these violent extremists. The proliferation of this vital and dangerous threat to America’s security continues to swell as non-state actors aggressively pursue biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. According to the NSS, “We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few.”¹³

In addition to exploiting the freedom of movement in ungoverned areas, non-state actors permeate vulnerable societies in weak and failing states to grow their violent and perverse ideology. Failing states unable to provide basic services give rise to impoverished, dissatisfied populations. It is these vulnerable societies that terrorists and criminals exploit to further their violent agendas. As per the NSS, “Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders.”¹⁴ In the absence of government services, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) provided schools, healthcare, and judicial systems in rural, ungoverned areas in Colombia collecting taxes from the local populace. Impoverished and dissatisfied societies are also susceptible to extremist ideologies. Terrorist networks have become adept at delivering powerful messages inciting anger and violence to recruit new foot soldiers in their destructive campaign. With no

schools available in much of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan, extremists are building Wahhabi Madrassas' spawning a new generation of youth that share their anti-western sentiment and ideology of violence. Access to vulnerable populations makes these terrorists and criminals an enduring threat. The social exclusion resulting from populations subject to severe inequalities of wealth and no access to basic services foments susceptibility to ideologues offering a better life. Terrorists exploit that social exclusion to spread their perverse ideology to recruit a new generation of violent actors that will threaten our nation well into the future.

Ungoverned space and vulnerable populations within failing states pose an enduring security threat to the US. Multiple quotes from strategic planning documents have validated US recognition of the danger failed states impose on the future of our society. The questions that follows is: what strategy can the nation employ to effectively defeat that threat?

Foreign development is the most effective strategy to defeat that threat.

In order to counter the emerging threat emanating from within weak and failing states, the U.S. must build viable nation-states that can maintain physical control of it's territories and provide basic services for the population. There is a plethora of strategic guidance that supports claims of foreign development as a central strategy to mitigating this threat. The Director of Foreign Assistance under the Department of State offers a series of definitions to ensure a common vernacular when discussing foreign development. A useful definition is as follows: "To help nations effectively establish the conditions and capacity for achieving peace, security, and stability; and for responding effectively against arising threats to national or international security and stability."¹⁵ Long-term foreign development

strategies that include humanitarian assistance, capacity building and economic assistance are essential for the US to succeed. Successful foreign development serves as a prevention tool to keep the US from having to rely on military force. Money spent on development represent an investment which in the long run is less costly than military action. According to Department of State 2010 budget request, “Expenditures on diplomacy and development represent an investment which in the long run is less costly in terms of lives and dollars than defense spending that would otherwise be required.”¹⁶

The Bush administration elevated the idea of development as an element of security policy in the wake of 9-11. The term “the three Ds” was coined indicating development stood right alongside diplomacy and defense in US foreign policy.¹⁷ After failures to effectively deliver non-DOD aid in the reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the National Security Council released NSPD-44 in an attempt to improve coordination of reconstruction, stabilization and assistance to foreign states. NSPD-44 recognized the threat from failing states and identified the necessity for preventative action. This was clearly articulated, stating the U.S. “should work with other countries and organizations to anticipate state failure, avoid it whenever possible, and respond quickly and effectively when necessary and appropriate to promote peace, security, development, democratic practices, market economies, and the rule of law.”¹⁸ NSPD-44 goes on to say, “Such work should aim to enable governments abroad to exercise sovereignty over their own territories and to prevent those territories from being used as a base of operations or safe haven for extremists, terrorists, organized crime groups, or others who pose a threat to U.S. foreign policy, security, or economic interests.”¹⁹ This vision of mitigating state failure is shared and espoused in strategic planning documents for both the DOS and the DOD. The DOS/US

Agency for International Development (USAID) Strategic Plan states, “The most intractable safe havens exist astride international borders and in regions where ineffective governance allows their presence; we must develop the means to deny these havens to terrorists. Where governments are willing but unable to fight terrorism, we will bolster their skills, capacities, and resources.”²⁰ The DOD also acknowledges the necessity for development programs as indicated in the QDR, “supporting the rule of law and building civil societies where they do not exist today, or where they are in their infancy, is fundamental to winning the long war.”²¹ Strategic guidance across multiple agencies all coincide with the theme of elevating development as the third “D” in our national security policy. In fact, when it comes to mitigating state failure, all advocate for putting development at the forefront. However, pushing uncoordinated waves of humanitarian aid may provide comfort to a charitable heart, but it does little to address our strategic needs. In order for development to effectively mitigate the security challenge emanating from weak and failing states it should include elements of humanitarian assistance, capacity building and economic assistance.

The US gives more in humanitarian assistance than any other nation in the world.²² According to the DOS, “the goal of humanitarian assistance is to save lives, alleviate suffering, and minimize the economic costs of conflict, disasters, and displacement.”²³ USAID directs multiple programs that deliver foreign aid to developing nations to ease human suffering across the globe. USAID also offers assistance in the form of grants and funding to support non-governmental organizations that want to be a partner in helping deliver the humanitarian goods to those in need. Disaster Relief is a major component of our humanitarian aid strategy. USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance provides an expeditionary branch of USAID that launches to foreign nations when affected by disaster to

provide immediate direction for US support and assistance. While seemingly an altruistic effort, disaster response is a preventative measure to counter potential state failure. Many states teetering on the brink of failure can easily be overwhelmed when struck by a natural disaster that exceeds their capacity to respond. These humanitarian aid programs play an essential role in not only easing human suffering, but in demonstrating American compassion. Those vulnerable populations are susceptible to the anti-American message often spouted by these violent ideologues capitalizing on social exclusion to spread their perverse message. The National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication recognizes a need to focus our strategic communication message on vulnerable populations to counter extremist ideologies. Most notably, this strategy emphasizes the diplomacy of deeds. “America’s deeds - providing health care, education, economic opportunity, food and shelter, training for political participation, help after disasters - can communicate our values and beliefs far more effectively than our words.”²⁴ This deeds based approach can send a resounding message of hope directly to those vulnerable populations criminal and terrorist networks attempt to exploit.

Capacity building is necessary to ensure foreign development efforts are enduring and impactful. While humanitarian assistance programs do work to alleviate human suffering and demonstrate American compassion through a deeds based approach, they don’t produce sustained improvements. Recall the old adage: you can give a man a fish, but teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime. Former Undersecretary of State, Stuart E. Eizenstat, co-authored an article advocating the view that the crisis of weak governance in failing states poses a severe security threat to the US. Eizenstat’s argument, in line with that of the NSS, propositions that US foreign policy is designed to confront enemies who danger lay in their

strength, however today's gravest dangers lie in the weakness of other countries.²⁵ Recalling US aid packages during the Cold War that seemingly purchased alliances with little intent on promoting development, Eizenstat contends in today's security environment, "strengthening good governance requires much more than just transferring cash. It also relies on building a state's capacity to protect its borders, provide essential public services, and ensure basic human rights for its people."²⁶ Capacity building is a theme for USAID in their pursuit of transformational development. As per Henrietta Fore, acting director of USAID in 2007, "Such development engenders lasting economic, social, and democratic progress, through a transformation of institutions, economic structures, and human capacity, so that nations can sustain further advances on their own."²⁷ The USAID foreign assistance framework outlines the department's programs and policy objectives towards improving skills, capacities and resources. In order to meet security challenges associated with failing states, foreign development should be focused around capacity building programs that produce improvements that can be locally sustained.

Economic assistance is the final pillar essential to enabling the development of weak states. Large social programs and increased governance cannot be sustained without increased income levels; for that you need economic growth. According to Eizenstat, "helping poor nations to stabilize and diversify their economies - empowering them to fight poverty and meet popular expectations - must be a vital facet of US efforts to significantly reduce the risk of total state collapse."²⁸ He argues the best way to prevent state failure is broad economic growth through expanding world trade and debt relief. As part of his recognition of state failure as a national security concern, President Bush established the goal of doubling the world's poorest economies within a decade. His strategy included raising

economic aid and grants, increasing contribution to the World Bank’s International Development Association, open societies to commerce and investment, and aid in agricultural development.²⁹ However, providing economic assistance to weak and failing states is a complex task. The Millennium Challenge initiative focuses aid on governments that “rule justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom.”³⁰ Intended to incentivize positive governance, the Millennium Challenge Corporation identified 64 low-income countries in 2009 in need of economic assistance; however nations like Sudan were prohibited from receiving aid.³¹ While the intent to incentivize good governance has merit, further isolating Sudan, which sits at number two on the failed state index, only furthers the potential of ungoverned spaces and vulnerable populations to be exploited by terrorists with violent agendas. These comments certainly don’t intend to advocate providing aid to cruel warlords and dictators; they are instead intended to illustrate the necessity of developing well thought out strategies and tactics when employing foreign development towards achieving national security aims.

In the end, a strong program of foreign development can serve as a prevention tool to keep the US from having to rely on military force. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General John Shalikashvili stated in 1999, “What we are doing to our diplomatic capabilities in criminal. By slashing them we are less able to avoid disasters such as Somalia or Kosovo, and therefore we will be obliged to use military force still more often.”³² General Shalikashvali’s statements align with earlier stated DOS assertions that money spent on development “is less costly in terms of lives and dollars than defense spending.”³³ Well focused foreign development programs will prevent the reliance on the military to counter the security threats in a failing state. Effective strategies that provide humanitarian

assistance, government capacity and economic development can be implemented to negate the requirement to employ costly military force in a failing state. The security institutions of our nation are predicated on the use of deterrent force to avoid conflict with strong potential enemies. This new era calls for us to shift from a strategy of deterrence to a strategy of prevention to allow us to avoid conflict within weak states.

Strategic documents widely assess foreign development as an effective strategy to prevent state failure. However, pushing charitable aid in the absence of a synchronized strategy does not meet US security concerns. Instead, the US should execute well planned and coordinated efforts that combine humanitarian assistance, capacity building and economic assistance to target regions and nations that have the potential to birth future security threats. A coherent foreign development program is both a valid and cost effective strategy to build viable nation-states that can maintain physical control of its territories and provide basic services for the population to counter the emerging dangers from ungoverned areas and vulnerable populations. Foreign development is acknowledged as viable defense strategy for weak and failing states that when employed correctly can prevent the use of military force. The recognition of this prevention strategy has seen an institutionalization of foreign development into the DOD mission.

The US is institutionalizing foreign development into the DOD mission

Recent policy decisions coupled with a marked advantage in resources has begun a process of institutionalizing foreign development into the DOD mission. Strategic documents across both DOD and DOS acknowledge foreign development as a mitigating strategy to defeat the threats from failing states. This same strategic guidance has resulted in

policy that has led to an integration of development in DOD strategies. Here the policies will be reviewed and discussed to demonstrate the institutional shift. These policies will then be applied to a vignette to demonstrate DOD traversing in the US foreign development mission.

Just two months before the release of NSPD-44, which aligned DOS to lead US stabilization efforts, the Office of the Secretary of Defense released DOD Directive 3000.05. This document was revised and released again in 2009 as DOD Instruction (DODI) 3000.05. The policy stated, “Stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct with proficiency equivalent to combat operations.”³⁴

This shift was ground breaking in that it moved away from the often heard cry associated with a Weinberger doctrine that opposed US military involvement in nation building.

Stability is defined as, “an overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.”³⁵

While DODI 3000.05 was released in the wake of struggling post-conflict reconstruction efforts, the above definition of stability isn’t restrictive to a post-conflict environment. The definition certainly includes foreign development, especially when applied in a phase-0 environment. DODI 3000.05 promotes the DOD as a leader in stabilizing weak and failing states to prevent conflict. The shift encouraging DOD use of “soft-power” was reinforced by the 2006 QDR, stating: “By alleviating suffering and dealing with crises in their early stages, U.S. forces help prevent disorder from spiraling into wider conflict or crisis. They also demonstrate the goodwill and compassion of the United States.”³⁶

DODI 3000.05 launched a catharsis of change across the DOD. The document calls for the DOD to “integrate stability operations related concepts and capabilities across doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and applicable exercises, strategies, and plans.”³⁷ Initially targeted at failing coordination during reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan, the verbiage and direction also called for action in other theaters. New doctrine has been written for Counterinsurgency, Stability, and Foreign Humanitarian Assistance. “Interagency” is a recurring buzzword heard through plans, strategic documents and military education institutions. In 2007 the Office of the Secretary of Defense released the *Report to Congress on the Implementation of DODD 3000.05*. The document provides a litany of changes across the services that will “institutionalize military capabilities to support SSTR operations.”³⁸ One of the most acknowledged changes is the development of US Africa Command (USAFRICOM). USAFRICOM was established as national security leaders have recognized the security threats emanating from the weak and failing states across the continent. According to the report, for AFRICOM to be successful, they will need to synchronize and integrate governmental, non-governmental, and private sector partners to meet their primary mission emphasis on stability operations as a mechanism to prevent or mitigate crisis.³⁹ The statement above is seemingly contradictory to NSPD-44’s direction for DOS, specifically S/CRS, to lead the synchronization of stability operations. While DOD leaders have made assuring statements that the focus of AFRICOM is on security cooperation, a widespread debate about the apparent militarization of US policy has erupted with the inception of this new Command.

One of the tasks given to Combatant Commanders in DODI 3000.05 is to “Integrate stability operations tasks and considerations into their Theater Campaign Plans, theater

strategies, and applicable DoD-directed plans.”⁴⁰ A recent change in strategic level planning documents within the DOD has seen the advent of the above mentioned Theater Campaign Plans. Direction passed down by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF) includes strategic end states that provide vectors for Combatant Commanders in developing security cooperation plans. These GEF end states are now the anchor for the aggregation of projected security cooperation activities into a cohesive Theater Campaign Plan. One of those end-states for US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) is, “States in the AOR control their sovereign territories, counter transnational threats and maintain professional, civilian-led militaries that respect human rights.”⁴¹ This end state speaks to state building, a task directly attributed to the DOD as per DODI 3000.05. The idea that military commander’s now shape the environment to prevent conflict was best articulated by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates when he said, “the overall posture and thinking of the United States armed forces has shifted away from solely focusing on direct American military action, and towards new capabilities to shape the security environment in ways that obviate the need for military intervention in the future.”⁴² As a vignette, this paper will explore USSOUTHCOM strategic guidance in pursuit of this GEF end-state to illustrate an example of foreign development embedded in the DOD shaping mission.

USSOUTHCOM’s Command Strategy 2018 recognizes weak and failing states as a security threat. The document states:

“The foundation of society rests upon the ability of a nation to provide security and stability for its people. Today, widespread poverty and inequality combined with corruption leaves many searching for the means for simple survival. A lack of opportunity and competition for scarce resources lead to an increase in crime and provide opportunities for gangs and terrorists to flourish. These conditions lead to an environment that threatens the security and stability of the entire region.”⁴³

Arguing the security threat emanating from the region are a result of poverty, inequality of wealth and social exclusion, Commander of USSOUTHCOM Admiral James Stavridis' 2009 posture statement to Congress indicates that the US must address these underlying causes of conflict to ensure security in the Americas. Stavridis states, "The cumulative effect of poverty and income inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean serves as a catalyst for insecurity and instability."⁴⁴ The posture statement also reflects, "the U.S. government, through our interagency, needs to be capable of assisting our partner nations by addressing the underlying conditions of poverty and inequality."⁴⁵ This perception of mitigating security concerns by addressing the underlying causes is a call for increased foreign development as a national security strategy. The DOD's long time policy of deterring conflict has seemingly shifted to a strategy of preventing conflict by shaping the environment through development to obviate the need for military force.

The USSOUTHCOM strategy and posture statement, much like that of USAFRICOM, clearly indicates that the DOD is in support of an overall interagency effort. In fact, USSOUTHCOM is quick to point out that twenty-one of the thirty intermediate military objectives in the Theater Campaign Plan are designated as a non-DOD agency lead.⁴⁶ Recall that one of the GEF end-states for USSOUTHCOM is, "States in the AOR control their sovereign territories, counter transnational threats and maintain professional, civilian-led militaries that respect human rights." Despite the acknowledgement that these objectives fall outside of the DOD lane, staffers are engaged in aggressive efforts at the USSOUTHCOM headquarters to employ the underlying cause strategy. USSOUTHCOM developed a "Partnering Directorate" with representatives from DOS and USAID. One of the offices within the partnering directorate is dedicated to supporting non-governmental

organizations (NGOs). Logisticians implemented policies through close coordination with Defense Security Cooperation Agency to more than triple the amount of humanitarian donations and commodities from NGOs shipped to the theater on DOD aircraft and vessels.⁴⁷ USSOUTHCOM was extremely active in responding to natural disasters, earthquakes and hurricanes throughout the region to demonstrate US goodwill through a deeds based approach. The command increased its aggressive NEW HORIZONS exercise series where teams of military personnel travel to partner nations to build schoolhouses, clinics and water facilities. While foreign development is not a DOD mission, much of USSOUTHCOM theater security cooperation activities seemingly focused on those underlying causes.

Foreign development has become institutionalized in the DOD mission in order to defeat the threat recognized within weak and failing states. The DOD has shifted its conflict mitigation strategies from deterrence to prevention. Strategic direction outlining the threat emanating from weak and failing states coupled with the direction to elevate stability as a core military function has sprouted a new generation of military leaders that comprehend the impact of ungoverned spaces and vulnerable populations to national security. The development of strategic end-states in the GEF call for Combatant Commanders to incorporate more soft power in their Theater Campaign Plans to ensure states in their AOR can control their sovereign territory. The maturation of thought among military leaders has led to an understanding that strategies focused solely on building security capacity fail to address the underlying causes of poverty, social exclusion and inequality of wealth. These conditions lead to increases in crime, illicit trafficking and the rise of extremism that destabilize states and their ability to control their sovereign territory. When the GEF end-state calls for “states in the AOR control their sovereign territories,” enlightened

Commanders pursue development in order to succeed. The DOD is now seeing more and more missions involving disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, and foreign development to prevent conflict by countering the impacts of ungoverned space and vulnerable populations. While the attempts at preventing conflict in weak states are laudable, the DOD is simply not the right US agency to lead a coordinated USG effort.

DOS, not DOD should lead foreign development in weak and failing states

After a series of nation building efforts during the early parts of the twentieth century, the US Marine Corps captured their experiences and produced the *Small Wars Manual*. The manual states, “One of the principal obstacles with which the naval forces are confronted in small war situations is the one that has to do with the absence of a clean-cut line of demarcation between State Department authority and military authority.”⁴⁸ As we enter another era of nation building, the ambiguity between State and DOD has reemerged now 70-years later. NSPD-44 attempted to remove that ambiguity and make clear the lines of authority, however, given that weak and failing states is acknowledged as a security threat, lines between State and DOD continue to be blurred. Further confusion arises as DOD leaders adhering to strategic guidance promote foreign development as a defense strategy. Below, this paper will explore the debate as to who should lead the coordination in defending our nation from the threats associated with weak states. Additionally, the negative perceptions associated with the militarization of foreign policy will be discussed. While resources weighs heavily in the debate, ultimately the DOS is the best agency to lead a coordinated foreign development strategy to defend our nation from the threats associated with the ungoverned space and vulnerable populations in weak and failing states.

Considering the DOD charter to defend the nation from any threats, some defense scholars feel the DOD should lead our nations coordinated efforts to counter the dangers of weak and failing states. Foreign development and nation building is an arena with which the DOD has a long history. The DOD has performed constabulary duties in US interventions in the Caribbean in the early 1900s, post WWII Germany and Japan, Haiti, Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq.⁴⁹ In addition to significant experience, the DOD also has established doctrine. The 1940 *Small Wars Manual* was just the beginning of military doctrine for stability operations. Within the last year updated joint and service doctrine have been published on Stability Operations and Counterinsurgency. Gregory Cantwell, in his article “Nation Building: a Joint Enterprise,” points to these documents among others to argue that the DOD should have the capabilities required to succeed in stability operations without the immediate assistance from other agencies.”⁵⁰ Advocating new functional components and training centers surrounding the existing geographic combatant command (GCC) structure, Cantwell argues that the “DOD is the best agency to lead the elements of national power for stability operations.”⁵¹ Cantwell’s argument is valid: the DOD has enormous advantages over DOS in resources, manpower, and funding. An already existing GCC infrastructure and validated planning systems provide a robust capability for leading our nation’s efforts to prevent conflict and mitigate the threat from a failing state. DOS does not have a comparable infrastructure, manpower pool or institutionalized planning processes. Perhaps that is why DODD 3000.05 states, “Many stability operations tasks are best performed by indigenous, foreign, or U.S. civilian professionals. Nonetheless, U.S. military forces shall be prepared to perform all tasks necessary to establish or maintain order when civilians cannot do so.”⁵² Pauline Baker, President of the Fund for Peace, confirms some of

Cantwell's assertions in her recent article "Forging a US Policy Toward Fragile States."⁵³ Baker assesses that the shortfall of civilian personnel capable of conducting state building has led to the military shaping US government policy toward fragile states. According to Baker, the military has "stepped up to the plate" and taken on the difficult tasks of understanding the drivers of violence and implementing state building tasks to avoid violence. According to Baker, "the Armed Forces have vastly more resources and are better organized than other agencies, and also have the institutionalized planning and evaluation mechanisms those agencies lack."⁵³ The DOD appears to be assuming much of the leadership in our weak and failing states strategy by default as it is the only federal agency capable on tackling such a large task. According to the book *Civilian Surge*, "The US government has been relying not on the civilian instruments of foreign assistance, but the military to achieve our strategic goals. This is not because the DOD has grabbed the mission away from other agencies. As the government's veritable 800-pound gorilla, it has been forced to fill the void."⁵⁴

Despite accurate assertions that the massive DOD advantage in resources makes it a more capable US Agency to assume this daunting mission, other leaders have argued it is the DOS that should lead our nation in defeating the threat from weak and failing states. The argument here is not who "can" lead, but who "should." Given their proclaimed mission statement and experience in foreign development, DOS is the right agency to coordinate the elements of national power in preventing conflict in a modern era where "we are threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones."⁵⁵ The National Security Council clearly identified DOS as lead in NSPD-44. The document states, "The Secretary of State shall coordinate and lead integrated USG efforts, involving all U.S. Departments and

Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities.”⁵⁶ The directive established, within DOS, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) to spearhead DOS efforts. While S/CRS is new to the DOS, the nation building mission is not. Economic development and building well governed states is a traditional DOS function. Consider the DOS mission statement: “...helping to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world composed of well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and act responsibly within the international system.”⁵⁷ DOS holds a unique skill set in foreign development. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), under the DOS, has been responsible for long-range social and economic assistance efforts dating back nearly 50 years to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Brent Snowcroft and Samuel Berger argue the DOS should lead our foreign development efforts in their article, “In the Wake of War: Getting Serious about Nation Building.” The authors state, “No other agency has the expertise for what is basically an exercise in state to state relations.”⁵⁸ Calling for DOS reform, Snowcroft and Berger advocate plans to elevate S/CRS to the Deputy Secretary level, increase funding lines and integrate with international organizations in what they call a “top foreign policy priority.”⁵⁹ While DOS has not adopted Snowcroft and Berger’s recommendations, the DOS is making reforms. S/CRS is taking bold initiatives: first integrating with DOD planners in the newly designed Interagency Management System (IMS) and second the development of a Civilian Response Corps (CRC). DOS has begun to build established planning processes similar to the DOD with the advent of the foreign assistance framework and the Whole-of-Government Decision Making Process. Additionally, DOS has dual tasked the Director of USAID also as Director of

Foreign Assistance to corral multiple programs together in an attempt to overcome the stovepipes associated with many federal agencies that levy foreign assistance in disparate programs. Continued reform is necessary if the DOS is to assume the daunting mission of defending the US against its greatest security threat: weak and failing states. While the debate between DOS and DOD ensues, it should come down to more than resources.

A widely used term often heard inside the beltway in Washington DC is “the militarization of foreign policy.” The term is a result of the US increased reliance on the military in the face of poorly funded and incapable civilian institutions. While the DOD is the most capable of our security institutions, the negative perceptions associated with overreliance on military force in foreign policy damages the credibility of our nation. According to the Secretary of Defense, “the United States military has become more involved in a range of activities that in the past were perceived to be the exclusive province of civilian agencies and organizations. This has led to concern among many organizations perhaps including many represented here tonight about what's seen as a creeping ‘militarization’ of some aspects of America's foreign policy.”⁶⁰ The book *America's Viceroy: The military and US foreign policy* is dedicated to studying the increased role the militaries geographic combatant commanders play in foreign policy. Discussing the role of Theater Campaign Plans⁶¹ and the DOD strategic concept of “shaping,” author James Robbins notes, “the advent of shaping gave the combatant commanders more diplomatic-political responsibilities in their region.”⁶² Robbins stated the goal of a Theater Campaign Plans is to “integrate activities with those of other US government agencies, non-governmental and private volunteer organizations, and our friends and allies.”⁶³

This idea of the DOD as the integrator of multiple agencies toward a diplomatic end-state speaks to the current controversy surrounding the advent of a new regional combatant command, USAFRICOM. Since its inception, USAFRICOM has been mired in debate as it is perceived to be a clear indication of militarization of foreign policy. In response to strong public criticism, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman stated, “The intent behind USAFRICOM was never to militarize foreign policy or diminish humanitarian or other development space. The goal from the inception has been to create something other than the traditional war fighting command but one with sufficient civilian expertise to focus on preventing problems before they become crises.”⁶⁴ The 2010 USAFRICOM Commander’s Intent repeats recurring themes as the Commander encourages the use of development as a strategy to prevent conflict. The statements reads, “Only through security and development can there be stability, and only through stability can there be hope for the future.”⁶⁵ Boasting by government officials tout USAFRICOM as a model for interagency integration, this new command has been constructed along interagency lines and holds an Ambassador as its Deputy Commander. Concerns elevating from lawmakers prompted Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte to address the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Continuing the argument of military by default, Negroponte stated, “For too long, insufficient numbers of trained, prepared, and supported civilians have obliged us to resort to the military for such missions more than might otherwise have been necessary.”⁶⁶ Echoing Negroponte’s remarks in that same hearing, Edelman remarked, “the risk comes not from DOD doing too much but from our civilian agencies being undermanned and under-resourced. In many ways DOD has had to act by default because of the lack of civilian partners and the significant risks that presented to our troops on the ground and to civilian

populations that we found to be in need of basic services.”⁶⁷ Akin to the Cantwell argument referenced earlier in this paper, the US government has seemingly capitalized on the DOD infrastructure and proven military planning processes to engineer an agency to integrate development strategies in a region abound with ungoverned space and vulnerable populations. While massive funding advantages make the DOD the most capable organization, the adoption of a military focused strategy in Africa has caused a negative reaction on the continent. A region whose history is mired with military coups is reasonably suspicious of military organizations. While much is written on the subject, a concise piece by Samuel Makinda, an Australian scholar on security, terrorism and counter-terrorism, captures the argument well. According to Makinda:

Why have U.S. officials insisted that the command’s role would include addressing such issues as political instability, human rights abuses, good governance, poverty alleviation, the building of health clinics and schools, and the digging of wells? These issues represent serious challenges in Africa, but a cross-section of people believes the military should be used to tackle them only in cases of emergency...Africans know that the militarization of political and economic space by African military leaders has been one of the factors that has held Africa back for decades. While African states are trying to put the culture of military rule behind them, the United States appears determined to demonstrate that most civilian activities in Africa should be undertaken by armed forces.⁶⁸

USAFRICOM provides a strong vignette to demonstrate the negative perceptions that can discredit our nation when we rely on a militarized foreign policy. It has been acknowledged by high-level officials from both DOS and DOD in testimony before the senate that this entity was built due to a lack of civilian capability. However, the cost of using the military has been US credibility on the continent. This is not exclusive to Africa. This past month, US forces rallied to help a devastated Haiti recover from massive damages due to an earthquake. In a strong effort to assist suffering Haitians, US forces deployed under

accusations from Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez that the US is occupying Haiti undercover of humanitarian relief. Photographs of heavily armed American soldiers handing out food and relief supplies send a confusing message to the world. The US continues to rely on its military to overcome deficient civilian institutions; in turn we are paying a cost in international credibility.

The National Security Council got it right when it tagged DOS to lead our efforts in the fight to overcome the threat of failing states. While foreign development is a viable defense strategy to defeat that threat, is still a Department of State mission, especially given the prescribed mission set of the dual-role Director of USAID and Director of Foreign Assistance. In light of underfunded civilian institutions, DOD leaders are being pushed to fill the gap and integrate foreign development into the military mission, but are doing so at a cost to US credibility. While DOS has seen some funding increases and is implementing transformation through their organization to execute this priority mission, it simply lacks the resources to lead a coordinated USG effort. Our national security institutions are designed to confront nation states who danger lay in their strength, not in their weakness. The result is a military focused foreign policy. The monolithic military is filling the gap where an inadequate civilian capacity is unable. In order to allow our nation to develop cohesive strategies to employ foreign development to defeat the threat within weak and failing states, the US must provide DOS the proper resources to conduct the mission it was tasked with in NSPD-44.

The DOS lacks the resources to lead USG efforts

NSPD-44 directed the Department of State to lead our nation's efforts in stability operations and defeating the threats associated with weak and failing states. While advances have been made to increase US capacity for diplomacy and development, the DOS is still dwarfed in comparison to the Defense Department. DOS continues to be understaffed and underfunded and the result has seen the DOD fill the gap in foreign development efforts. There is a disconnect in grand strategy and execution as a nation that has acknowledged failing states as its biggest threat continues to focus on military primacy. The below quips are offered to demonstrate the scale of difference between the two organizations.

- The United States has more musicians in its military bands than it has diplomats.
- In 2008, the United States Army added about 7,000 soldiers to its total; that's more people than in the entire American Foreign Service.
- The entire American diplomatic corps, about 6,500 people, is less than the staffing of a single aircraft carrier group.⁶⁹

The US is unable to adjust its security institutions despite widely acknowledged recognition that 1) weak and failing states are an enduring security threat, 2) foreign development is the most effective strategy to defeat that threat and 3) the DOS is the best institution to lead USG efforts at foreign development. Regardless of the seemingly universal recognition of these facts in strategic planning documents, the US continues to prioritize defense spending over diplomacy and development. The US is unable to adjust its security institutions to meet the threats of the 21st century. Our current security posture is on based on a 20th century cold war paradigm; it is deeply embedded in our political and economic systems. It has been supposed throughout this paper that the US security institutions are designed to secure the nation from states whose danger lie in their strength, not their weakness. Much of our defense posture is aligned on a cold war paradigm of

deterrence - peace through strength. There is continued debate and discussion today about the effects of peacekeeping operations and their impacts on the readiness of our military to defend the nation from a conventional threat. From reading the National Defense Strategy, one would suspect that China could someday challenge us militarily. A further look however would reveal that the US military budget is nearly 7-times that of China.⁷⁰ It hardly seems reasonable to fear the power projection capability of a nation that does not have an aircraft carrier. In fact, the US military budget accounts for just under half (41.5%) of all the world's military expenditures combined.⁷¹ Who are we preparing for? Overly focused on military primacy, the US has been unable to shift its security paradigms despite acknowledgement that weak and failing states is the looming security threat to the nation. Even senior military leaders have recognized the need to rebalance our focus in the “three Ds” from defense toward diplomacy and development as illustrated by the vignettes presented on USSOUTHCOM and USAFRICOM. Comments from both the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense have relayed concretely that stronger efforts towards diplomacy and development could potentially obviate the need for costly military force. All of this is recognized by national security leaders, yet the US continues to promote a capabilities imbalance. In 2009, the DOS budget request was just \$11B; that is forty-seven times less than the \$515B allocated for the DOD base budget.⁷²

In the book *America’s Viceroys*, authors Derek Reveron and Michelle Gavin attribute much of this imbalance to politics in the congressional budgeting process. According to the text, “The conventional wisdom indicates that while defense spending is understood to be a matter of national security, foreign assistance spending and support for public diplomacy simply sound less urgently necessary to American voters.”⁷³ Reveron and Gavin go on to

say, “Members of congress have an obvious interest in courting the significant pool of military voters and their families (over five million in the DOD family), but they also have an interest in associating themselves with the ideas of patriotism and strength.”⁷⁴ Defense spending has ingrained itself deeply in our political and economic culture; a controversy in this past year’s budgeting process illustrates an excellent example. The proposed 2011 defense budget called for an end to domestic funding of the C-17. The 223 aircraft in service and on-order were assessed by defense leaders to be enough to meet the nation’s needs. However, active lobbying by both Boeing and congressional leaders concerned about the 5,000 jobs at risk in Long Beach California saw the Senate and the House override the decision. Ten more C-17’s valued \$2.5B was included in the final defense budget.⁷⁵ Despite a determination by defense leaders that there were enough C-17s, more of these aircraft were ordered to save jobs in a congressional district. According to a Boeing spokesperson, “[this will give] the (Department of Defense) more time to consider their future airlift needs.”⁷⁶ That \$2.5B is more than seven times greater than the \$323M the DOS had allocated toward the Civilian Stabilization Initiative (CSI) designed to “bring the U.S. government a means to lead the civilian interagency efforts to prevent or respond to conflict or civil strife in foreign countries or regions.”⁷⁷ That money also dwarfs the just \$249M allocated to fund the Civilian Response Corps (CRC) planned to devise a corps of mission-ready experts in fields such as policing and the rule of law, transitional governance, and economic stabilization and development.⁷⁸ Initiatives like CSI and the CRC continue to be woefully underfunded leaving our civilian capacity unprepared to employ foreign development programs to mitigate the threats associated with the ungoverned space and vulnerable populations within weak states. Senior leaders acknowledge that properly resourcing these programs could

prevent conflict and obviate the need for costly military intervention. Yet, they seem helpless to overcome security institutions, deeply ingrained in the nation's political and economic fiber, which prioritize defense over diplomacy and development.

Ironically, one of the more outgoing advocates for an increase in DOS funding is Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. Gates has frequently espoused that "we can't kill or capture our way to victory" in the long term campaign against terrorism. Acknowledging that his pitch for more DOS funding is a hard sell politically, Gates joked that it could be considered "blasphemy" by some in the Pentagon.⁷⁹ In a 2008 speech at the Global Leadership Campaign, Gates confirmed convictions that weak states threaten our nation when he stated, "I believe the most persistent and potentially dangerous threats will come less from ambitious states, than failing ones that cannot meet the basic needs much less the aspirations of their people."⁸⁰ Recalling assertions in his National Defense Strategy about foreign development to alleviate the threat associated with ungoverned space and vulnerable populations, Gates continues, "What the Pentagon calls "kinetic" operations should be subordinate to measures to promote participation in government, economic programs to spur development, and efforts to address the grievances that often lie at the heart of insurgencies and among the discontented from which the terrorists recruit."⁸¹ Gates has witnessed the military assuming the development mission by default and has frequently criticized what he perceives to be a "militarization of foreign policy."⁸² An ardent supporter of increased funding for the State Department, Gates continued, "It has become clear that America's civilian institutions of diplomacy and development have been chronically undermanned and underfunded for far too long relative to what we spend on the military."⁸³ He even challenged the political institutions, stating: "These programs are not well understood or

appreciated by the wider American public, and do not have a ready-made political constituency that major weapons systems or public works projects enjoy. As a result, the slashing of the President's international affairs budget request has too often become an annual Washington ritual.⁸⁴ This speech is just one of many where Gates called for an increase in the capability of our nation's experts in diplomacy and development.

The most senior Defense official in the US stated our greatest threat comes from weak states. He promotes a strong capacity for diplomacy and development as the most effective strategy to mitigate that threat. He recognized the DODs ominous role in diplomacy and development and has castigated what he perceives as a "militarization of foreign policy." He has declared the military should be subordinate to the DOS in employing development programs to prevent conflict. Finally, Secretary Gates is one of the more outspoken advocates for increased funding to our international affairs budget in order to allow our civilian capacity to lead. His arguments seem to align closely with those presented here.

Summary

There is a disparity in US foreign policy. Despite seemingly universal recognition of failing states as an enduring threat to the nation, the US has failed to adapt its security institutions to mitigate that threat. Five correlated arguments have been presented:

- 1) Weak and failing states are an enduring security threat to the US
- 2) Foreign development is the most effective strategy to overcome that threat
- 3) The US is institutionalizing foreign development into the DOD mission

- 4) DOS, not DOD should lead foreign development in weak and failing states
- 5) The DOS lacks the resources to lead USG efforts

These arguments build to support the thesis of this paper: while foreign development is a viable defense strategy, the DOD should not assume this State Department mission. To ensure the security of the nation, the US needs to grant the State Department with the resources to lead USG efforts to mitigate the threats associated with weak and failing states

In order to overcome the security challenges that arise from ungoverned spaces and vulnerable populations, the US must employ a balanced foreign development strategy. However, failure to properly resource the nations experts in diplomacy and development has seen the military filling the resulting void by default and institutionalizing foreign development into the DOD mission. The outcome is a militarization of foreign that has the potential to generate adverse impacts on US credibility internationally, as demonstrated in the case of AFRICOM. The Department of State should lead the foreign development programs that will ultimately defend this nation from what the National Security Strategy indicates is our greatest threat - failing states. Properly resourced DOS programs like the Civilian Stabilization Initiative and the Civilian Response Corps represent “an investment which in the long run is less costly in terms of lives and dollars than defense spending that would otherwise be required.”⁸⁵ Reforming our security institutions and resourcing the State Department now can prevent conflict and obviate the costly use of military force in the future. An ounce of prevention beats a pound of preemption.

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